THE ANNUAL REPORT (1898)

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

for the

URBAN DISTRICT OF SHANKLIN.

Gentlemen: - During the past year of 1898 there have been registered within your district eighty-nine births, viz., 52 males and 37 females. Of these 89 births 10 were illegitimate, which makes it 11% of the birth-rate.

Within the same period there have been fifty-six deaths, viz., 23 males and 33 females.

The birth-rate is therefore 17.8 per 1000 of population, which is an increase over last year of 3 per 1000.

The death-rate is 11.2 per 1000 which is an increase over last year of 1.8 per 1000.

The slight increase in the death-rate is attributable to the epidemic of influenza which was prevalent during the months of January and February.

From the point of view of age the deaths have occurred as follows: -

					Under	1	year	7 deaths
Over	1	year	and	under	5	years	2	"
"	5	"	"	"	15	"	0	"
"	15	"	"	"	25	"	2	"
"	25	"	"	"	65	"	17	"
"	65						28	"
							56	Total

It will be observed that exactly 50% of the total death-rate was made up of persons over 65 years of age. Further excluding those deaths occurring in persons over 65 years and babies under 12 months, we have left only 21 deaths for all other ages.

From the point of view of [illegible] the result does something to
[illegible] -

Over	[illegible] and under	[illegible] years	"
"	[illegible] " "	15 "	"
"	15 " "	20 "	"
"	20 " "	25 "	"
"	25 " "	30 "	"
		30	
		30 Total	
		30	

[illegible] it will be observed that exactly 60% of the total number
have some means of obtaining over 25 years of age. Further
analysis under [illegible] occupation [illegible] of course not appro-
priate under [illegible] we have left only 21 deaths for all
other ages.

As to causation, the deaths were certified as due to the following causes: -

13	deaths	were	due	to	Senile Decay
8	"	"	"	"	Bronchitis
6	"	"	"	"	Phthisis Pulmonalis
5	"	"	"	"	Cancer
5	"	"	"	"	Diseases of the Heart
3	"	"	"	"	Infantile Diarrhoea
2	"	"	"	"	Puerperal Septicaemia
2	"	"	"	"	Influenza
2	"	"	"	"	Syncope
1	death	was	"	"	Intestinal Obstruction
1	"	"	"	"	Post Partum Haemorrhage
1	"	"	"	"	Injuries during birth
1	"	"	"	"	General Tuberculosis
1	"	"	"	"	Infantile Convulsions
1	"	"	"	"	Purpura
1	"	"	"	"	Marasmus
1	"	"	"	"	Apoplexy
1	"	"	"	"	Enteric Fever
1	"	"	"	"	Accident

As to Sections, the Senate was confined at 121 to the following number -

I have already mentioned that 50% of the death-rate was attributable to persons over 65 years of age. It will be observed that Senile Decay heads the list easily when considering the various causes of death. Next to this comes Bronchitis. This points clearly to the fact that Influenza and its complications, is particularly fatal to old people. Regarding the deaths caused by Phthisis (Consumption) most of these deaths were those of people who having the disease had come here for the milder climate. Considering the number of people that do come here suffering from that disease, we may conclude that the climate is very favourable for them when we find only five deaths due to that disease, and moreover that is the largest return of deaths from Phthisis during my period of office. For the last 6 years the average number of deaths per annum is 3.6 for that disease.

Only one death was recorded as due to Zymotic disease and that was a case of Enteric fever. This was moreover the only case of Enteric fever that occurred within your district during the past year and this case was not contracted here but imported from elsewhere. The doctor attending the case assured me that the patient arrived in Shanklin already sickening with the disease.

The only other notifications of Zymotic diseases were 7 cases of Diphtheria all of which terminated in recovery. Four of these cases occurred in one house at the same time and were distinctly traceable to the insanitary state of the house, which had the main drain ventilating freely into the pantry in which the milk was kept for the children to drink. The other 3 cases were widely separated in place and time and no local cause could be found to account for them.

With the exception of "Influenza" which occurred in epidemic form during the months of January and February, there has been nothing of the nature of an epidemic. There was only one case of Enteric fever and, as above pointed out, that case was clearly introduced from without so that for more than two years that disease has not been seen within the Shanklin district.

WATER SUPPLY: - The Council may congratulate themselves upon having obtained the long needed auxiliary water supply. It is a fact now well known to you all that the Wroxall water was turned into the Shanklin mains just in the nick of time.

SHANKLIN CHALYBEATE SPA: - Now that more than three years have elapsed since the chalybeate spring at Shanklin was formally opened it is possible to state from experience that this water is of great value in the treatment of certain diseases.

A gradually increasing number of patients have been taking courses of this water, as is shewn by the returns of the Spa Hotel.

In delicate women suffering from anaemia it is most beneficial. Indeed it appears to be of most value in the treatment of debility so often seen in young women.

It has curiously enough a very beneficial effect in many cases of eczema of long standing. Whenever there is inability to take the chemical preparations of iron this water is excellent and can almost always be easily assimilated without any gastric disturbance. There can be no doubt about the value of this water as a medical agent and I think it most advisable that you should do what you can to make it as widely known to the public as you can.

DRAINAGE: - It appears to me that the time has arrived when a complete plan of the sewers of the Shanklin Urban district should be made and a copy supplied to the M.O.H., the Surveyor and the Inspector of Nuisances. I am bound to admit that although I have been M.O.H. for your district for a period of six years I do not know with any degree of certainty the exact position of many of the Shanklin sewers, this is not as it should be.

It would be a great advantage for you to have flushing tanks at the highest points of your main sewers and so flush the sewers say once a week. By so doing you would, especially in summer time, greatly decrease the amount of sewer gas emitted from the ventilating shafts.

The house situated at the top of the Cowlease is now empty and therefore it would be an excellent opportunity for you to get entirely rid of the cess pit belonging to that house and replace the present arrangement by an earth closet. I am aware that you had the cess pit cemented, but cement work may crack, and situated where it is there is no reason why in such case you should not get some of the contents into your water which comes from the upper stretches of that field. You may not think that such a thing is highly probable, but if it did happen the result would be so serious - nay disastrous - that the possibility should be certainly removed.

BRITISH: - The frequency of emptying the house ash pits was increased during the summer months, but I find that complaints reach me during the late autumn, viz. when the fruit season is well advanced, of offensive smells from the refuse pits. I believe you would be acting in the interests of public health if you extended the time of more frequent emptying of these places.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

J. Shirley Cowper M.B.

M.O.H. SHANKLIN URBAN DISTRICT.

4 February, 1899.